

Dear CRHD Chair Blackwell, CRD Housing and Hospital Committee Chair Helps,  
CRHD Members and Committee Members:

The Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee (NAC) is a committee of the Quadra Village Community Centre (aka Downtown Blanshard Advisory Committee or DBAC). NAC's purpose is to facilitate the building of a healthy neighbourhood by providing a forum for Hillside Quadra neighbours to discuss land use issues and forward feedback regarding land use decision making to Victoria City Council.

Many neighbours would like to attend the Wednesday May 1, 2019 1:30 pm meeting of your committee, but we received notice on the Saturday prior to register to speak with a Monday afternoon deadline. We send regrets from these many neighbours who are at work or school at this time. The neighbours in our community have been left in shock at how our public tax dollars which fund health care, hospitals, schools and affordable housing are being used to decrease the health and resilience of our neighbourhood. Public housing needs to be distributed throughout the region and neither concentrated nor walled off by regional facilities that provide no service to local residents.

Hillside Quadra residents commonly recognize that Blanshard Elementary School at 950 Kings Road was built to accompany one of the largest social housing projects in BC, then called Blanshard Courts, now Evergreen Terrace. This 1960s expropriation and urban renewal project that built the Blanshard Street part of Highway 17 destroyed an old neighbourhood but created some balance between poor people's needs with the services and green space offered by an elementary school. The small Quadra Village Community Centre is now at capacity supporting local neighbours through programs which include the old school gym.

Here is what we have witnessed in the past few years:

- The Blanshard School site was sold to the Capital Region Hospital District, a use of our hospital tax levy to buy land from our tax-supported school district to take away our community facilities and green space.
- The complex (end-of-life) care Summit Hospital was proposed for the former school playing field.

- The Summit consolidates existing smaller hospitals, but we don't see plans for these other sites are included in the planning options presented for new facilities.
- The Summit asked neighbours to participate in hospital site design discussions.
- Neighbours were met with a *decide-announce-defend* strategy from Summit consultants consisting of no flexibility in a proposed design. This amounted to neighbours wasting their time as tokens in a placation strategy of involvement. Neighbourhood interests were dismissed and a reasonable opportunity to be heard was denied.
- The Summit Hospital now stands as an 18m high wall adjacent Evergreen Terrace.
- CRHD passed a motion to commit to involve neighbours as part of a multi-stakeholder working group to discuss the uses and design for the remainder of the Blanshard school site.
  - We understand that the working group has met without ever honoring its commitment to include neighbours, and so we are met with the same *decide-announce-defend* strategy.
- City of Victoria has not used its zoning power to change the R3-2 zoning created in the 1960s, to create new zones or address the size and massing of institutional buildings and the relationships between a mix of 5 dwelling and 5 institutional types of uses.
- A Local Area Plan was scheduled to be initiated a few years ago to replace a 20-year old neighbourhood plan. Hillside Quadra was put to the bottom of a list of neighbourhoods which eliminated the opportunity for the neighbourhood to use new policy and land use tools.

We witness that because public land is available, politicians are making a convenient decision to address regional commitments all in one place without any regard for the residents who occupy the place. This is worse than the 1960s so-called urban renewal which created these land uses because there is no thought for how residents can live healthy lives.

The current plan for 950 Kings Road proposes to add a so-called innovative mental health facility and 200 units of housing which would create an increased demand for community services. Our community centre is small and over capacity

now. The CRHD plan proposed to eliminate our community gym and the small, unorganized remaining green space.

The Hillside Quadra NAC would like to challenge the members of this committee and the CRHD to bring their own experience to the table to help create a healthy and more resilient neighbourhood next to the Summit Hospital. We know that:

- Langford's downtown has been transformed into a walkable more vibrant city,
- Victoria's placemaking efforts have helped create better urban spaces, and
- Saanich has promoted age-friendly and healthy community projects.

We ask you to bring your own best practices to our neighbourhood.

- Let us have real participation before deciding with us, your constituents and funders, what to build,
- Think of what makes a healthy neighbourhood rather than checking off mental health patients and housing units,
- Think about your regional assets on a regional level, not in a lazy convenient way, and
- Don't under estimate the value of real collaboration and creativity.

If you would like ideas, here's a starting place:

- Don't take away the community centre gym,
- Provide community services suggested in the community centre HUB proposal,
- Let's think collaboratively how community services for the neighbourhood can exist with housing,
- Locate the regional facility together with other health facility assets in regional locations where public housing and hospitals don't exist. Collaborate with the residents in those locations too. We have more than our share now.

Thank You

Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee Executive

01 May 2019